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SUBJECT: INTRODUCING SLOVAKIA'S NEW CABINET

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¶1. (U) President Gasparovic swore in the new cabinet of the Fico government on July 4. Of the fifteen ministries, ten have gone to Smer, three to SNS, and two to HZDS. The majority of these new ministers are little-known on the Slovak political scene. However, the ones of most active interest to us -- Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Defense -- are either political figures well known to us, or professionals in their fields.

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: JAN KUBIS, SMER

¶2. (SBU) Although nominated for the Foreign Ministry by Smer, Jan Kubis is not allied with any party; he is a career diplomat. Demonstrating trust in the MFA staff and devotion to maintaining continuity in foreign relations, Kubis has named former-Minister Kukan's chief of staff Peter Kmec as his own chief of staff. Born in Bratislava in 1952 and educated at the Moscow State Institute for International Affairs, Kubis began his career at the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry in 1976. He represented the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the UN-Geneva, GATT, and other international organizations. Kubis also served at the embassies in Moscow and Addis Ababa during the 1980s, and from 1991 to 1992, he was Director-General of the Euro-Atlantic Section. After the establishment of Slovakia in 1993, Kubis was appointed ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, where he worked from 1993 to 1994. His other positions include Director of the Center of Prevention of Conflicts of the OSCE from 1994 to 1998, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Tajikistan from 1998 to 1999, head of the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) from 1998 to 1999, and OSCE Secretary General from 1999 to ¶2005. In July 2005, he was appointed the EU's Special Envoy to Central Asia. Kubis so far has been professional and responsible for his public statements. He introduces himself to the diplomatic corps July 10.

MINISTER OF INTERIOR: ROBERT KALINAK, SMER

¶3. (SBU) Born in 1971, Kalinak is Deputy Chairman of Smer, and has been an MP and shadow interior minister since 2002. A lawyer by profession, he studied at Bratislava's Comenius University, focusing on commercial law. In addition to his membership in the Slovak Parliament, Kalinak works at a law firm, and co-owns (with at least one American partner) local restaurant chain Steam and Coffee and another company called Equity. From 2002 to 2005, Kalinak was chairman of the Parliament Committee for Defense and Security and head of the Parliament Special Committee supervising the National Security Office (NBU). He has also been a member of the Bratislava regional assembly since 2005. Well-known at the Embassy, Kalinak holds promise as a young politician and new member of the Slovak Cabinet.

MINISTER OF FINANCE: JAN POCIATEK, SMER

14. (SBU) Although an MP for Smer, Pociatek's background lies in business. A graduate of the Department of Electronics at the Slovak University of Technics and the University of Economics in Bratislava, Pociatek began his professional career as trade director, and later as executive director, of Telenor Slovakia. According to the commercial registry, he has been involved in several firms together with Robert Kalinak, including co-ownership of the restaurant chain Steam and Coffee, and Pociatek is also a partner in Harley Davidson Slovakia. Pociatek has yet to voice his opinions on the flat tax and on the introduction of the Euro, although he has told the daily Sme to "wait for the first steps of the government [...]; we will convince everyone that Slovakia won't suffer any catastrophe."

MINISTER OF ECONOMY: LUBOMIR JAHNATEK

15. (U) Jahnatek is virtually unknown to the Slovak public, or to the Slovak political elite. A graduate of chemical-technical studies, Jahnatek spent 14 years working for the Plastics Processing and Application Research Institute. He then worked as Strategy Director at Duslo Sala (another company) for two years before moving on to General Director of Plastika Nitra. Jahnatek also worked with the Association of Employer's Unions, heading the international component of the organization in Geneva. His boss from the organization, Michal Lach, has told the daily Sme that Jahnatek is "ambitious, and the ministry may be a fitting position for him."

MINISTER OF DEFENSE: FRANTISEK KASICKY, SMER

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16. (SBU) Kasicky has a great deal of experience with defense and security, and maintains positive relations with the Embassy. As a spokesman for the Ministry of Defense, he has served under four different ministers. He has been Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee for Defense and

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Security since 2004, as well as Secretary of the Special Parliamentary Committee for the Monitoring of the National Security Office and the Committee for the Use of Information and Technological Means. Prior to that, Kasicky held the positions of Director of the Office of the Defense Minister and Director of the Communication Department. In 2003, he became Director of the Military Defense Intelligence (VOS), but was dismissed from that post in May 2004 by then-Defense Minister Juraj Liska. New Minister of the Interior Robert Kalinak, who was Chairman of the Parliamentary Defense Committee at that time, voiced concerns that Kasicky had been sacked for political reasons. He later retracted those worries, stating that Kasicky had been dismissed instead on reasons of a "professional character." Nonetheless, the rest of VOS was shocked by the dismissal. Kasicky was said to be popular among all of VOS, including among the opposition.

MINISTER OF HEALTH: IVAN VALENTOVIC, SMER

17. (SBU) Valentovic is not officially affiliated with any political party, but it has been said that he leans in favor of HZDS, particularly towards his good friend and MP Milan Urbani. Although Valentovic has worked in the health ministry, his last several positions have been with various health insurance companies. He received his education in the health field in the U.S. and Germany, and since 2004 he has been the General Director of the Community Health

Insurance company. The daily Sme writes that Valentovic is well-suited for the position of Health Minister because he has experience in health management and insurance, in addition to having been a doctor himself.

MINISTER OF LABOR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AND FAMILY: VIERA TOMANOVA, SMER

18. (U) The only female in Fico's cabinet, Tomanova has over a decade of experience with social affairs, having served as Smer's shadow minister and having worked in the Ministry from 1988 to 2003. Born in Bratislava in 1948, Tomanova graduated from Bratislava's Economics University in 1972. She began working at a retirement home and then went on to a social welfare home in Velke Biely. She became Director of Slovak Road Management, and since then has served several positions at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family, including advisor to the Minister. As Smer's shadow minister, Tomanova was known for her criticisms of social reform, opposing the rapid reform of the second pillar regarding insurance for pensioners. Currently, Tomanova teaches at the Trnava University and the St. Elizabeth School of Health and Social Work in Bratislava.

MINISTER OF CULTURE: MAREK MADARIC, SMER

19. (SBU) Smer's former press secretary and spokesman, Madaric holds expertise in television and media. He graduated with a degree in film and television dramaturgy from the Academy of Music, Drama, and Fine Arts in Bratislava, and began his career writing scripts and advertising slogans. In the early 1990s he worked at Slovak Television and later for an advertising agency. From 2002 to 2004, he was Deputy Chairman of the Slovak Television Council, and from 2002 to 2006, he was assistant to MP Dusan Caplovic. Madaric went on an IV trip in 2001 and speaks highly of his visit to the U.S., which he said helped him gain a better understanding of American institutions. However, Madaric also holds Fico in very high regard.

MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION, POST, AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS: LUBOMIR VAZNY, SMER

110. (U) A member of Smer's leadership and the shadow minister of transportation, Vazny has been an MP since 2002. Born in 1957 in Zilina, he studied construction at Bratislava's Technical University, and went on to work in the construction sector. From 1985 to 2002, Vazny was responsible for investments for the Stavoinvesta Company, and a member of the board of directors and the chairman of the supervisory board of the pharmaceutical company Biotika Slovenska Lupca. Since 1994, Vazny has headed the Stavoinvesta Company. From 1997 to 2002, he was a member of the management team at the Biotika Slovenska Lupca company.

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MINISTER OF EDUCATION: JAN MIKOLAJ, SNS

111. (SBU) An MP since 1998, Mikolaj began his political career as a member of HZDS. He became independent in 2004, and together with Vojtech Tkac, created the short-lived People's Union before switching over to SNS, to which he currently belongs. He was born in 1953 and has lived in Slota's hometown of Zilina since 1956. Mikolaj graduated with a degree in Construction from the University of Zilina in 1977. He worked as a construction manager until 1983, when he took up assistant teaching position at the University of Zilina. After earning his PhD in construction, Mikolaj held various teaching positions at the University. From 1995 to 1998, he headed the Slovak Roads Management company, before returning to the University of

Zilina, where he was named a professor in 1998 and remains to this day. In 2004, Mikolaj participated in an Embassy-sponsored visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels. The new Minister of Education is little-known in that field, although over the past eight years he has built up his reputation in the area of construction and highways.

MINISTER OF CONSTRUCTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: MARIAN JANUSEK, SNS

¶12. (SBU) A construction engineer by profession, Janusek works as Deputy Mayor of Zilina, under Mayor Jan Slota. As new Minister of Construction and Regional Development, Janusek hopes to find more efficient ways to spend Euro Funds because they have not been distributed correctly in the past. Part of SNS' election program was a vow to make sure families could have their own homes within a year of the birth of their first child; Janusek has said that this is his next priority. The daily Sme quoted Janusek's acquaintances as calling him a "decent person," but one who is deeply under the influence of Slota. In fact, these people have voiced concern that the ministry might be modeled after the Zilina city government.

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT: JAROSLAV IZAK, SNS

¶13. (U) Izak is an architect and former mayor of the town of Handlova. He is a member of the Trencin regional government and an executive officer of IBS Handlova operating in cargo transportation and real estate business. Izak told the daily Sme that he would occupy himself with "all the environmental problems Slovakia is living with," and he hopes to improve the efficiency of spending of Euro funds.

MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND DEPUTY PM FOR LEGISLATION: STEFAN HARABIN, HZDS

¶14. (SBU) A long-time friend of both HZDS and SNS, Harabin has a long history in the Slovak justice system; unfortunately, not all of it has been positive. He was appointed Chief Justice in 1998, but was dismissed in 2000 as a result of conflicts with members of Parliament, as well as several scandals under his leadership. Harabin sued a local newspaper over allegations of corruption in the courts under his supervision. Harabin began his career at the Poprad district court in 1983, moving up to the Kosice regional court in 1990, and then in 1991 to the Supreme Court. Harabin became Chief Justice in 1998 at the recommendation of SNS -- then a member of Meciar's government coalition. Even Smer contacts have voiced concerns over Harabin's appointment.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE: MIROSLAV JURENA, HZDS

¶15. (SBU) Jurena is a veteran from Meciar's era, who has just been elected MP for HZDS. He is relatively new to the political scene in the capacity of an MP, but Jurena is an old-time friend of HZDS. The company Ressprint -- on whose board of directors Jurena served -- received over 4.5 mill SKK (\$150,000 USD) from the Ministry of Culture under Meciar for "extraordinary cultural activities"; this contribution remains mostly unknown to the public or media. Jurena maintains that HZDS held no direct influence on the firm. Currently Jurena is involved with eleven different firms, although he has told the daily Sme that he plans to give up managerial positions in these firms once he takes his position as Minister of Agriculture. Jurena also told Sme that he planned to bring his own people to the Ministry in order to successfully complete his goals as Minister.

DEPUTY PM FOR ECONOMICS: DUSAN CAPLOVIC, SMER

116. (SBU) A historian and archaeologist, Caplovic serves as a Deputy Chairman of Smer and has been an MP since 2002. He has also served as Smer's shadow minister of education and culture and as a member of the Cabinet Council for Science and Technology. Caplovic studied archaeology and history at Bratislava's Comenius University and then went on to work in the Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV) in Nitra. He served as SAV Deputy Chairman from 1995 to 2001, and is currently an external lecturer at the Philosophy Department of Comenius University. Caplovic is from the nationalist wing of Smer, which favored the party's union with SNS rather than with the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK).

SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT: PAVOL PASKA, SMER

117. (SBU) As a Deputy Chairman of Smer, Paska has served as an MP and a shadow minister of health since 2002. Born in 1958, he graduated from the Philosophy Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. Paska was a private businessman since 1992 and became an MP for Smer in 2002. He comes from the Kosice wing of Smer, which tends to be more pro-American than the rest of the party, and the Embassy has maintained a positive working relationship with him. Paska was a harsh critic of Minister Zajac at the same time that the firm Glynn Brothers Chemicals Slovakia -- with Paska at the helm as Director -- received almost four mill SKK (\$133,333 USD) from Veritel, the state-created firm designed to pay off the debts of health care facilities. As quoted in the weekly Tyzden, Paska commented that he did "not see any problem" with politically criticizing a system from which he benefited as a businessman. Another of his companies, Arcen, went into default after racking up more than 100 mill SKK (\$3.3 mill USD) in debt and interest. Paska is also a vehement critic of former PM Dzurinda.

DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT: ANNA BELOUSOVA, SNS

118. (SBU) Formerly known as Anna Malikova, Anna Belousova has long been a leader in SNS and a rival of party Chairman Jan Slota. Beginning her career as an elementary school teacher in 1983, Belousova was one of the founders of SNS in her hometown of Kysuce. She began as an advisor in the party and gradually moved up to several different positions within SNS. In 1994, Belousova became the first woman in the history of the party to serve as Deputy Chairwoman, and in 1999, she became Chairwoman. In 1998, she was elected MP on behalf of SNS, but as a result of differences between Belousova and Slota, the nationalists split into SNS, led by Belousova, and PSNS, led by Slota. They both failed to reach the five percent needed to enter Parliament and therefore, rejoined in 2003. According to some sources, Belousova and Slota were infamous for fighting -- even throwing punches -- inside SNS headquarters, especially when either had had a drink.

DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT: VILIAM VETESKA, HZDS

119. (U) A lawyer by training, Veteska worked for years in the travel industry, culminating in the position of Chairman of the Board for Slovak Airlines. He has served as Vice Chairman to Meciar's HZDS party for four years. Veteska belongs to the wing of HZDS which favors cooperation with Smer. Since 2002, he has held a seat as Deputy Speaker of Parliament. He lists his top political priority as the development of the travel and tourism industries.

DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT: MIROSLAV CIZ, SMER

120. (U) A member of Smer's Board of Directors, Ciz has

served as a Smer MP since 2002, where he has been a member of the Mandate and Immunity Committee. He previously lectured on the topic of public administration at the Institute for National Committees in the 1980s. Throughout the 1990s, Ciz worked as a staff expert in Parliament before becoming an MP. Born in 1952, he received a law degree from Comenius University in Bratislava in 1978.

DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT: MILAN HORT, SDKU

¶21. (U) After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Hort became actively involved in local politics in Nova Dubnica, and from 1990 to 1994 he served as the town's mayor. Hort was a founder and active member of the Association of Slovak

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Mayors and the Union of the Slovak Towns (ZMOS), serving as vice president of the organization for two years.

¶22. (U) In 1998 he was elected MP on behalf of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK), and a year later he helped to found the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU). Today he is esteemed by the party as its expert on public administration. Hort was reelected MP for SDKU in 2002 and also became the head of the SDKU Faction in Parliament and the Chairman of the Committee for Public Administration. In November 2002, the SDKU Congress elected him to the position of the SDKU Deputy Chairman for Regional Policy.